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Chair: Mr. Bowler ..... (Malawi)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 55: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) (A/70/133, A/70/312, A/70/341, A/70/351, A/70/406, A/70/406/Corr.1 and A/70/421)

1. **Mr. Al-Moualimi** (Saudi Arabia), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that the Group was deeply concerned at the recent sharp rise in acts of violence, terror and provocation perpetrated by Israeli settlers and security forces against Palestinians, in particular since October 2015, and the continued violations by Israel of international human rights law and humanitarian law. He recalled that, in November 2015, Arab League ministers had issued a decision denouncing ongoing Israeli settler terrorism, State terrorism, colonization, Judaization and ethnic cleansing as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

2. According to the reports submitted to the Committee, there had been no abatement in Israeli aggression; the occupying Power continued to use excessive and lethal force against Palestinians and to hold thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, in prison. Prisoners, including children and pregnant women, were subjected to mental and physical torture and killed in cold blood; after death, their bodies were desecrated. The Arab Group called on the international community to condemn such crimes unequivocally, hold the Israeli authorities fully accountable and bring all perpetrators to international justice without delay.

3. Israeli settlers and State forces continued to desecrate Islamic holy sites, threaten the security of Muslim and Christian places of worship, attempt to Judaize Jerusalem and strip its holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Haram Al-Sharif, of their historical Arab identity. Immediate and decisive measures must be taken to oblige Israel to cease those illegal practices.

4. The Israeli forces showed blatant contempt for international consensus and jeopardized the two-State solution by continuing to evict and forcibly displace Palestinians, demolish their homes, confiscate their property, expand settlements, extend the separation wall, exploit resources in the occupied Syrian Golan and illegally trade goods produced in Israeli settlements, in contravention of the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and related United Nations resolutions. The Group expressed its appreciation to Governments that had banned their citizens from doing business with Israeli settlers and called on other States to follow suit. The decision of the European Union to introduce specific labelling for goods that originated from occupied territories also represented a positive step towards ensuring legal and moral accountability in that regard.

5. The unjust Israeli blockade of Gaza was resulting in acute poverty, economic collapse and severe unemployment, particularly among Gazan youth, and had robbed Palestinians of the basic means to live in dignity. Restrictions on freedom of movement in the West Bank had damaging economic and social consequences. Thousands of Gazan families remained homeless because Israel continued to thwart reconstruction efforts in the wake of its devastating attacks on the Gaza Strip in 2014, which had caused extensive loss of life and destroyed thousands of buildings, including United Nations facilities. Since Israel was all too clearly failing to meet its responsibility to protect Palestinians, the Arab Group called for urgent action to establish a system of international protection in the occupied State of Palestine, including Jerusalem, pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

6. The Arab Group reaffirmed its full support for the Palestinian people in their ongoing resistance and courageous defence of their land and holy sites in the face of hostile Israeli practices. It called on Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with international law and all political, economic and security-related agreements to which it was a signatory. Israel must also cooperate with efforts to set a deadline for ending its occupation of the Palestinian territories and other occupied territories in Lebanon and the Syrian Golan, withdraw to the pre-1967 borders, achieve a just and comprehensive peaceful settlement in accordance with the relevant legal decisions and the Arab Peace Initiative, and enable the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

7. **Ms. Al Musharakh** (United Arab Emirates) said that the findings of the Special Committee were

incomplete because Israel continued to refuse to cooperate with it or allow its members entry into the Palestinian territories. Given that the extent of illegal Israeli practices went far beyond what had been documented to date, her delegation called on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to allow the members of the Special Committee to enter the occupied territories so that they could report in full on Israel's violations of international law, including its failure to meet its obligations as an occupying Power.

8. Her delegation was deeply concerned about the increase in illegal Israeli practices and the rising tensions resulting from Israel's gross violations of international law. As highlighted in the report of the Special Committee (A/70/406 and A/70/406/Corr.1), increasing numbers of Palestinians were being held in Israeli detention centres, where they suffered medical neglect, ill-treatment, beatings and torture. Hundreds of children had been subjected to arbitrary detention, with some given prison sentences of up to 20 years. Israel continued to expand its settlements, demolish Palestinians' homes, confiscate their land and forcibly displace large numbers of families, including many Bedouins, in the West Bank and in particular in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians were subjected to restrictions on their freedom and, based on a multitude of discriminatory laws, treated as "permanent residents", whose status could be revoked at any time. Israel continued to obstruct deliberately the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Palestinians and to allow settlers to commit acts of violence against them with impunity, while the victims of such aggression suffered serious humanitarian, financial, psychological and economic consequences. The Israeli forces exercised repression and excessive force against unarmed Palestinians and intentionally delayed or obstructed their access to medical treatment. Israel had not only maintained its illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip but had also carried out repeated attacks on the area, notably the most recent military onslaught in 2014, during which over two thirds of the casualties were civilians. Such collective punishment had had a devastating psychological, physical and economic impact on the population and had led to high rates of unemployment and shortages of fuel, electricity and sanitation. Furthermore, Israeli companies and the State continued to exploit Palestinian natural resources.

9. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories was becoming increasingly strained as a result of persistent Israeli acts of provocation, intimidation and racial incitement, including the desecration of holy sites, and the lethal and violent attacks perpetrated against innocent Palestinians, including children, by the occupying forces and extremist Israeli settlers. Such practices were the product of the culture of hatred and impunity fostered by the Israeli Government among its citizens.

10. The United Arab Emirates strongly condemned Israel's persistent violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and other relevant international agreements, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace. The Israeli Government must immediately cease its violations and assume full responsibility for its actions. Her delegation also called on the United Nations to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and take all necessary measures to put an end to all provocation and illegal practices by Israel, in particular its settlement expansion activity and attempts to divide the Haram Al-Sharif spatially and temporally, all of which had repeatedly thwarted the peace negotiations.

11. The Palestinian cause remained the highest priority for all Arabs; the lack of a just solution was the main catalyst of extremism and terrorism in the region. Her delegation called on the international community, including the Security Council, the Quartet and their regional partners, to do their utmost to bring peace and security to the region by ending the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, and implementing the two-State solution based on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant international resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Madrid principles. The Secretariat should continue to support the Special Committee in its important work of reporting on the illegal practices of Israel, in accordance with its mandate.

12. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) said that, while Israel persistently refused to cooperate with the Special Committee or allow access to international organizations in order for them to verify the situation on the ground, innocent Palestinian civilians continued to suffer brutal repression, restrictions on their rights and freedom, harassment by Israeli settlers, terror and provocation at holy sites, including the

Al-Aqsa mosque compound, and bleak prospects for a negotiated and comprehensive peace settlement. Violent incidents were on the rise and a third and more intense intifada was being predicted. The suffering of the Palestinians was further exacerbated by the eight-year blockade of Gaza, which was severely hampering reconstruction efforts in the wake of the devastation caused by the 2014 conflict in Gaza. Collective punishment, though clearly futile, continued to be inflicted.

13. The Israeli military's heavy-handed practices and use of live ammunition, which had resulted in high numbers of casualties among innocent civilians, were a matter of concern. Limitations on the use of force under international law applied in cases where a military occupying Power operated in civilian areas. Also of concern was the discriminatory Israeli legislation which imposed disproportionate penalties on Palestinian minors, including four-year prison sentences for stone-throwing, while the arrest of youth activists and their family members on charges of incitement on Facebook further fostered a climate of fear and despondency. Such mental and physical torture of Palestinian youth would only engender more violence.

14. Pakistan welcomed the Secretary-General's recent visit to the region and supported his view that the only way to end the violence was to make genuine progress towards a just and lasting political solution, which must include an end to the occupation and the establishment of an independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in addition to the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces from all Arab lands, including Lebanon and the Syrian Golan. Noting that the prospects for any such solution remained bleak, she asked what could be done to achieve the necessary progress and wondered whether the Security Council would remain mute on the issue.

15. She reiterated her Government's unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their long struggle for self-determination. Bearing in mind that the 2014 conflict in Gaza had greatly increased the responsibilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Agency's financial needs must be urgently met and the pledges made following that conflict should be fulfilled without delay.

16. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa) said that the Committee's debate was taking place against a backdrop of escalating tensions and violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially East Jerusalem; as a result of the hostilities, 73 Palestinians had been killed and at least 2,360 injured, while attacks on Jewish Israelis had also resulted in the death of 11 Israelis. His delegation condemned all violence, regardless of the perpetrators. It conveyed its condolences to the families and friends of victims on all sides of the conflict and called upon the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to exercise restraint when responding to the recent incidents. South Africa denounced all attempts to change the historical status quo in the Holy Land, which had preserved mutual respect for the holy sites of the world's three major monotheistic religions. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was an urgent reminder of the need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the roots of which were the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land in 1967.

17. His delegation was gravely concerned at the Special Committee's findings regarding the situation of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including women and children. It called on Israel to respect the human rights of all Palestinian prisoners and abide by the relevant provisions of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. South Africa condemned the ongoing settlement activities of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which showed blatant disregard for international opinion, undermined the two-State solution and threatened the viability and territorial contiguity of the future Palestinian State. It also condemned the violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property, including home demolitions, and urged the Israeli authorities to take action against the perpetrators of such actions. It stressed the urgent need for Israel to lift its illegal blockade, which was exacerbating the already dire socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

18. The only way to achieve lasting peace between Israel and Palestine was to hold comprehensive and unconditional negotiations to address all final status issues, including with regard to Israeli settlement activity, the lifting of the blockade on Gaza and the continuing occupation of Palestinian territory. Such negotiations would also greatly contribute to peace and security throughout the Middle East. His Government

supported international efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as part of a two-State solution that would allow the States of Israel and Palestine to coexist side by side in peace, on the basis of the borders of 4 June 1967.

19. **Mr. AlJarallah** (Kuwait) commended the Special Committee for the diligent work it had undertaken despite the restrictions imposed upon it by Israel, which refused to cooperate with its investigations. The report of the Special Committee clearly showed that Israel was continuing its systematic settlement expansion in defiance of international law and duly adopted resolutions. The sharp rise in settlement construction since the previous year was the clearest proof of Israel's obstinacy and insistence on flouting international law. Such actions also undermined Israel's credibility in efforts to reach a lasting political settlement that included the establishment of an independent State of Palestine within the pre-1967 borders.

20. Israel's savage attack on Gaza in July 2014 had wreaked unprecedented devastation. Its imposition of the logic of force, regardless of the repercussions, stood in sharp contrast with the international community's calls for it to abide by the principles of international law. Kuwait reaffirmed its full support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to secure its legitimate political rights, end the Israeli occupation of its land within a specific time frame and establish an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It also demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners and the dispatch of an international fact-finding mission to investigate the conditions in Israeli occupation prisons and verify the extent of Israel's compliance with international law in that regard. Kuwait rejected Israel's illegal and inhuman blockade of the Gaza Strip.

21. His delegation reiterated its support for Palestine's request for full membership in the United Nations. The international community should assume responsibility for compelling Israel to cooperate with the Special Committee and implement its recommendations, thereby ending its flagrant violations of international humanitarian law in the occupied territories.

22. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) called upon Israel to allow members of the Special Committee to enter its territory to hold consultations with the Israeli Government and Palestinian victims in the occupied territories. For over 67 years, Palestinians had struggled to survive under an illegal and inhumane economic blockade, which severely restricted their ability to meet their own basic needs, including health care, education and decent housing. In the light of the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, he wondered how the Palestinians would ever be able to realize their right to development or achieve the Sustainable Development Goals while Israel continued its illegal occupation of their territory. In the Gaza Strip in particular, all aspects of the economy were controlled by Israel, which exploited natural resources, restricted Palestinians' freedom of movement and destroyed their infrastructure and crops on a daily basis. Gazans could not focus fully on their social and economic development when their primary concern was simply to survive; meanwhile, the international community stood by and did nothing to relieve their suffering.

23. It was regrettable that, despite increasing numbers of deaths among innocent Palestinians, in addition to mass displacement and the continued destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure, the Palestinian question remained unresolved. Nicaragua called upon the international community, including the Security Council, to prevent further escalation of the already tense situation in East Jerusalem, including in the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, ensure respect for religious freedom and prevent religious incitement to violence and extremism.

24. Nicaragua stood in solidarity with Palestinian political prisoners, especially women and children, who were held in Israeli jails and subjected to inhumane treatment by the Israeli authorities, which had provoked hunger strikes and in some cases led to the death of prisoners. His Government therefore called for the immediate release of all Palestinian prisoners imprisoned by the Israeli authorities.

25. The first step towards achieving peace and sustainable economic development in Palestine would be to implement the relevant resolutions calling for Palestinian sovereignty and self-determination and allow Palestinian refugees to return to their historic homeland. His Government reiterated its support for the Palestinian State in its struggle for freedom and the realization of its inalienable rights and stressed that occupied peoples, like all others, had a right to

development. Issues relating to the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, illegal Israeli settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water must be resolved before a just and sustainable peace could be achieved. Nicaragua supported the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, thus allowing both States to co-exist peacefully side by side, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the wishes of peace-loving peoples. The raising of the Palestinian flag at the United Nations during the current session of the General Assembly demonstrated the increased international support for the Palestinian cause. Any peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict must involve all countries in the region and address not only the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also the situation in the Lebanese occupied territories and the occupied Syrian Golan.

26. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria) said that Israel was severely hampering the work of the Special Committee by persistently refusing to cooperate with its mandate to investigate systematic human rights abuses by the Israeli Government against the people of Palestine. In addition to its principal crime of denying Palestinians their right to self-determination, Israel also subjected them to a myriad of economic and social hardships, desecrated their places of worship and perpetrated aggression against them, including a recent attack in which children had been burnt to death. Advances in technology meant that people all over the world could now receive broadcasts that showed the Israeli authorities arming fanatics and condoning their attacks on Palestinians peacefully demanding an end to the occupation. Furthermore, the illegal and colonialist blockade of Gaza had effectively turned the territory into a vast prison. Algeria urged the international community to use the means at its disposal to resolve the Palestinian question by ending the occupation and ensuring the establishment of a fully-fledged Palestinian State.

27. **Mr. Halima** (Egypt) said that his delegation was deeply concerned about ongoing Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories, and in particular the record numbers of tenders issued over the last two years for the construction of residential units in Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such activity, compounded by the violent actions of Israeli settlers against Palestinians, was rapidly shattering any possibility of reaching a two-State solution.

28. While his Government remained committed to achieving peace and condemned all violence against civilians, it emphasized that recent Israeli practices, including attacks on worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, constituted unprecedented provocation not only against Palestinians but against Muslims worldwide. In addition to their potentially devastating impact on the peace process, such actions could strengthen the hand of extremist and terrorist groups by serving as additional material for their deceptive recruitment practices among Muslim youth.

29. The crisis in Syria was not a reason for the international community to forget about the occupied Syrian Golan. His delegation strongly condemned Israel's continued occupation of that territory and urged Israel to withdraw immediately to the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

30. **Mr. Proaño** (Ecuador) said that the reports of the Secretary-General before the Committee, which drew attention to repeated violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and other Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967, also highlighted once again the disappointing double standards with which the United Nations addressed many crucial issues of the day. It was a matter of grave concern that while the reports dealt with a number of recurring issues, there were no signs of any improvement of the situation in the State of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, and the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the question had been blatantly ignored. The litany of deliberate violations of international law — including, inter alia, the excessive use of force against civilians, the blockade of Gaza, Israeli settlements and the inhumane treatment of Palestinian and Arab prisoners — had become routine in the occupied territories and, despite its efforts, the United Nations lacked the capacity to prevent them. The latest outbreaks of violence in Palestine and Israel clearly highlighted the inability of the Organization, in particular the Security Council, to address the root causes of the question of Palestine.

31. It was clear that disregard for the law, the often disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force and the military might of the occupying Power had in no way helped to make countries of the region more secure and stable, created a conducive environment for nation-building or generated any legitimacy but had merely succeeded in sowing resentment, distrust and

frustration and in creating a vicious cycle of chaos, violence and death. Legitimacy would be established not only by the ratification of treaties and conventions but through tangible demonstrations of compliance with those treaties, with moral and ethical codes of conduct, and with the law. The international community should also ask whether the option of preferring force over the rule of law was sustainable over the long term from a legal, political, economic, social and ethical perspective.

32. Negation of the other merely sparked retaliatory mentalities, a situation from which no one stood to gain. For there to be peace in Israel and Palestine, it was necessary to address comprehensively and decisively the underlying obstacles by ensuring an end to the military occupation and the full exercise of Palestinian sovereignty over its territory, demarcated on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, and with the right of return for expelled Palestinians. The international community and the United Nations must urge both parties to resume negotiations without preconditions as soon as possible with a view to reaching fair agreements on the key issues that had hindered the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on the vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within safe and recognized borders.

33. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives) said that the report of the Special Committee added to an ever-growing corpus of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, International Court of Justice rulings and numerous reports from United Nations bodies and other international organizations representing the overwhelming global will for an immediate and unequivocal halt to the harmful Israeli practices that denied the populations of the occupied territories their inalienable rights. Israel's national policies consistently and blatantly violated international law and constituted a system of apartheid. The blockade of Gaza was the collective punishment of an already downtrodden population: with over two thousand Palestinians killed since 2014, over 25,000 housing units destroyed, and half a million Palestinians displaced during recent hostilities, there was no justification for the further deprivation of aid and assistance to that population. The creation of a destitute population dependent on foreign aid was the direct result of military occupation, by means of which Israel — which was directly responsible for systematic violations of fundamental rights — perpetuated a cycle of hatred, fear and violence. Occupation was not and had never been the solution, but was rather a self-sustaining force that destroyed communities' ability to do anything more than simply survive.

34. He expressed his delegation's solidarity with the Palestinian people and reiterated its unwavering support for the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to a sovereign and independent State. The Maldives supported a two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel co-existing side by side, based on the pre-1967 borders, and with Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and called for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories. The Maldives once again joined other delegations in calling upon Israel to stop disregarding the overwhelming weight of international law and global will and to bring an end to decades of injustice, violence, and hatred.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

35. **Ms. Meitzad** (Israel) said that every year the Committee held the current absurd meeting in which her delegation witnessed a march of folly as the worst human rights abusers voiced not only their hypocrisy but often their superficial knowledge of the subject. The Special Committee's findings were effectively decided before it even started its work and a simple Internet search of some of the alleged facts would reveal how distorted the report was compared to reality. The result was yet another misleading and destructive United Nations report that presented half-truths and twisted facts taken out of context. She wished to set the record straight with regard to the baseless accusations and lies that had been repeatedly proffered during the consideration of the current agenda item.

36. While welcoming the marked interest in Palestinian rights shown by the representative of Lebanon, she suggested that, before speaking about Israel, he might wish to take a look at the refugee camps in his own country, where Palestinians endured some of the worst conditions in the region in terms of violence, extreme discrimination and economic and social oppression. As for his accusations regarding Israeli Government policies, it should be recalled that Hezbollah, an internationally designated terrorist

group, was part of the Lebanese Government, comprising half its cabinet.

37. The long statement by the Palestinian representative had failed to answer why the Palestinian Authority was refusing to resume direct negotiations with Israel, which remained committed to the two-State solution and had repeatedly invited the Palestinian President to resume peace talks. However, the Palestinian Authority continued to evade the question while making outrageous allegations, even accusing Israel, in an official letter to the Security Council, of organ harvesting — an obscene reflection of the blood libels of the nineteenth century. By inciting further violence and by refusing to return to Gaza and to resume direct negotiations, the Palestinian Authority was avoiding taking responsibility over the current wave of terror and over its own people and their future.

38. It never ceased to amaze her that a brutal regime that lacked all international credibility believed it had any right to lecture others. The ongoing attempts by the Syrian representative to divert the conversation and to blame everyone else for the devastating humanitarian situation in his country were tiring; none must forget that he spoke on behalf of a regime that systematically used chemical substances to murder its own citizens. With regard to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cuba, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, she hoped that the citizens of those countries enjoyed the same rights of freedom of speech or assembly as did their representatives at the United Nations. Those who truly sought to play a positive and constructive role in the conflict must focus their efforts on supporting the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians as opposed to making empty statements in the Fourth Committee.

39. **Mr. Hamed** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the delegation of Israel, having listened to a torrent of international condemnation of the Israeli Government throughout the debate on the current and the previous agenda item, had regrettably resorted to its usual defamatory accusations against Member States and to its claims that the Fourth Committee was politicized, in a futile bid to divert attention away from the Israeli Government's heinous crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

40. It was outrageous for the representative of Israel to comment on the peace process and human rights when her Government appeared to be a contender for a world record in terms of the extent, magnitude and sheer brutality of its human rights violations in the occupied Arab territories. Israel also continued to prevent human rights organizations, peace activists and representatives of the United Nations, including members of the Special Committee, from entering the occupied territories to carry out their work. He wondered if the representative of Israel considered every statement delivered before the Fourth Committee on the topic at hand as "politicized", even those made by States that were friends of Israel.

41. He urged the Israeli delegation to open its eyes for once and see the reality of the systematic abuses carried out by its Government on a daily basis; Israel's violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, which included daily killings of innocent Palestinians, home demolitions, and policies of racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing aimed against Arabs living under the occupation, had been extensively documented by the United Nations. In view of those facts, he could only conclude that the representative of Israel had either failed to understand her Government's crimes or was deliberately refusing to do so; that came as no surprise given the relentless onslaught of terror and oppression perpetrated against the peoples of the region by the Israeli State ever since its establishment.

42. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that her delegation stood by its statement before the Committee and the letters it had addressed to the various organs of the United Nations. Those statements of fact reflected — without distortion, rhetoric or propaganda — the real suffering, trauma and terror endured every day by the Palestinian people under decades of foreign military occupation. The representative of Israel continued to ignore that occupation and refused to address it by any means, whether in the context of international law, the United Nations, including the Fourth Committee, and reports of credible United Nations agencies, or in negotiations for a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution.

43. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, rather than mouthing insincere expressions of sorrow about the human rights situation in certain countries, including his own, the representative of Israel, a regime that was guilty of killing children, should instead explain why her Government had attacked

Gaza in 2014, killing over 2,200 and injuring more than 10,000 Palestinians, demolishing 25,000 homes, and forcing the displacement of more than half a million Palestinians. It should be recalled in that regard that 100,000 Palestinians were still displaced because of the significant delays in reconstruction efforts, all because of continued Israeli aggression. The facts in his statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had been quoted from the report of the Special Committee and the representative of Israel should be called upon to answer the many questions raised during the debate.

Agenda item 57: Comprehensive review of special political missions (*continued*) (A/C.4/70/L.14)

Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.14: Comprehensive review of special political missions

44. **Mr. Alday González** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution, said that Austria, the Central African Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Montenegro, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and Uruguay had joined the sponsors. Mexico, convinced that transparency and accountability could only strengthen Member States' understanding of and participation in international peace and security, would continue to insist in the Fourth and Fifth Committees that clearer and more detailed information should be made available to all Member States on the criteria and rules for the establishment and definition of the mandates of special political missions. It was important to promote the holding of, and participation in, regular interactive dialogue on overall policy matters pertaining to such missions.

45. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

46. *Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.14 was adopted.*

Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) (A/C.4/70/L.5)

Draft decision A/C.4/70/L.5: Question of Gibraltar

47. **The Chair** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

48. *Draft decision A/C.4/70/L.5 was adopted.*

Agenda item 56: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*) (A/70/95-S/2015/446 and A/70/357-S/2015/682)

49. **Mr. Kim Taedong** (Republic of Korea) said that over the last year significant progress had been made in efforts to improve and enhance peacekeeping capabilities and activities: military leaders attending the first United Nations Chiefs of Defence Conference had discussed how to improve military performance in peacekeeping on the ground; the comprehensive review of peace operations had yielded a number of bold and ambitious recommendations, outlined in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people (A/70/95-S/2015/446); the Secretary-General had issued his report on the future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682); major reviews of the peacebuilding architecture and women, peace and security had been conducted; and pledges of some 40,000 troops for current and future peacekeeping deployments had been made at the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping held in September 2015. Despite those efforts, millions of innocent people were still being dragged into new or recurring armed conflicts, while those displaced from their homes by violence were suffering in exile, not knowing when they would return.

50. Against that backdrop, there was a need to build common understanding and sustainable momentum for the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General and of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. To that end, the Republic of Korea had organized a conference in New York in July 2015 and an expert meeting in Seoul in October 2015; it planned to hold a follow-up international conference in New York in early 2016. His delegation also hoped to continue holistic discussions on those recommendations in the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, and to contribute to building political momentum for their implementation.

51. With regard to capability management and readiness enhancement, while most of the current capability gaps had been filled or reduced, it should be

recalled that, in 2014, a number of missions — including the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in the face of the Ebola outbreak — had been struggling to meet tremendous needs in the field. Experience had shown that new or renewed crises could strike at any time and in any place. Force generation, the management of capabilities and pledges, upgrading performance standards and readiness in times of peace were all essential for improving preparation for and response to future conflicts. His delegation welcomed the recent capability management enhancements made by the Secretariat in establishing the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell, developing the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System that had replaced the United Nations Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS), and strengthening the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership through outreach to Member States. The Republic of Korea had made three major pledges at the Leaders' Summit, including a commitment to provide an additional engineering unit to assist in reconstruction and humanitarian activities in conflict zones.

52. Partnership with regional organizations and actors must be strengthened. Given the intertwined, complex nature of contemporary challenges, the United Nations should forge more coherent, effective partnerships at all levels and take decisive steps to strengthen regional peace and security architectures. Regional organizations, especially the African Union, were becoming more prominent in the global security context because of their unique comparative advantages. It was worth exploring the High-level Independent Panel's recommendation that the Organization should provide enabling support to African Union peace support operations, including through more predictable financing. To that end, the Republic of Korea had pledged to provide deployable level-two hospital equipment through the African Union to enhance peacekeeping capacity in Africa.

53. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that his Government attached great importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations, to which it had been contributing for 57 years. Since the first deployment in 1948, the scope of United Nations peacekeeping operations had evolved and significantly expanded. Moreover, peacekeeping missions increasingly operated in diverse, challenging, and often hostile environments in ever more uncertain and volatile political situations, and were required to interface with a complex set of actors. That trend had highlighted the critical issues of host country sovereignty and consent, the protection of civilians and the building of national capacity. Consequently, peacekeeping had become a multidimensional, multifaceted enterprise, with new and complex mandates and provisions. Yet, in most cases, the achievements of peacekeeping operations fell far short of desired outcomes.

54. In that context, his delegation commended the Secretary-General for convening the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which had produced comprehensive and practical recommendations. In view of the results of the limited implementation of the Brahimi recommendations, and drawing lessons from other best practices, his delegation considered that a thorough examination of the Panel's report and the related report of the Secretary-General was necessary to optimize and maximize the results of implementation of their recommendations.

55. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was the sole intergovernmental body mandated to conduct official reviews of United Nations peacekeeping operations. A holistic approach to international peace and security, through the United Nations peace architecture, should involve a balanced combination of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Due emphasis should be placed on what could be done in the area of prevention by implementing underutilized Charter provisions and enhancing the resources and capability of the Secretariat for that purpose. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the appointment of co-chairs to facilitate the intergovernmental negotiations on the review of the peacebuilding architecture and looked forward to engaging in that process. Those efforts must also be considered and implemented together with the new development agenda as a long-term sustainable preventive mechanism.

56. To date, Nepal had provided over 120,000 peacekeepers in 42 different missions around the world; 70 of them had lost their lives in the cause of international peace and security. Nepal had deployed its two contingents in UNMISS and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and had also provided niche capabilities such as an explosives ordinance disposal company, military police teams and

special force contingents in a number of other United Nations missions throughout Africa. Nepalese personnel currently served in 15 missions: with 5,199 male and 169 female troops deployed, it was the sixth largest troop-contributing country. Despite the difficulties it had encountered as a landlocked and least developed country in switching from UNSAS, Nepal had welcomed the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System as the sole access point for peacekeeping pledges and commitments and had placed all its pledges in that new system for review. It expected transparency and fairness in the implementation of the system. Nepal was also prepared to assist fellow troop-contributing countries in predeployment and other specialized training courses, in particular through its peacekeeping training centre, which it planned to develop into a regional centre of excellence.

57. Nepal was committed to increasing the number of women in its army and police forces and to deploying more women for peacekeeping, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and other related resolutions, which it was implementing through a dedicated national action plan. The predeployment training courses it provided to troops focused strongly on the protection of civilians and in particular, the protection of women and girls from sexual violence during and after conflict; extensive training was also provided on United Nations policies regarding sexual exploitation and abuse, and the protection of human rights. Nepal enforced a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and fully supported the Secretary-General's approach in that regard.

58. By its very nature, peacekeeping was, and must remain, a shared responsibility between the General Assembly, the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries, regional and subregional organizations, the host country, and the United Nations Secretariat. Early engagement and consultation in drafting mission mandates and exit strategies made missions more effective. Mission mandates must reflect realities on the ground and be responsive to changing conditions. Mandates must also respect the basic principles of United Nations peacekeeping, namely the consent of the parties, impartiality, and use of force only in self-defence or in defence of the mandate. The increasing incidence of attacks against peacekeeping personnel was a matter of grave concern. Their safety and security were the responsibility of the United Nations and must be given the highest priority. Similarly, their immunity should not be arbitrarily waived, in a non-transparent manner, and without prior consultation with the sending Government.

59. **Mr. Akhtaruzzaman** (Bangladesh) said that, as one of the leading troop- and police-contributing countries, Bangladesh had a vital stake in the effectiveness of peace operations. Recognizing that the range and context of peacekeeping were rapidly changing, it had constantly updated its deployment capabilities and had demonstrated its capacity to deploy at very short notice to high-risk, complex missions. It acknowledged the need to improve rapid deployment and force generation in start-up missions, and to ensure stronger protection of civilians, and stood ready to contribute in those areas.

60. Aware of the need to modernize the technologies used by peacekeepers, his country had established the state-of-the-art Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training, which was being developed as a centre of excellence for training Bangladeshi peacekeepers and for providing customized training, joint exercises and technical support for other troop- and police-contributing countries. Bangladesh promoted training in the protection of civilians, gender and human right issues and language skills and strongly advocated a zero tolerance policy with regard to sexual misconduct by peacekeepers.

61. His delegation had supported actions to give effect to the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel and was willing to engage further on the constructive ideas put forward in the Secretary-General's report. The pledges of infantry, formed police units and enablers, including utility helicopters, made by his Government at the last Leaders' Summit reflected its continued commitment to and full support for United Nations peacekeeping. Bangladesh had been one of the first countries to register its pledges through the newly introduced Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System.

62. His delegation welcomed the fact that peacekeeping operations had improved and were being managed more seriously than ever before. In order to achieve sustainable peace, stability and security, it was vital to create a mindset of tolerance and mutual respect irrespective of ethnic, social or religious differences. Bangladesh was confident that if more resources were committed to that end a more peaceful world could be achieved.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.